

Neal, Clay

From: Mayor Sam Adams [MayorSam@portlandoregon.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2012 11:09 AM
To: Neal, Clay
Subject: [Approved Sender] Statement from Mayor Sam Adams on the U.S. Department of Justice Review of the Portland Police Bureau

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From the Desk of
Mayor Sam Adams



Statement from Mayor Sam Adams on the U.S. Department of Justice Review of the Portland Police Bureau.



September 13, 2012

Dear Portlander,

Two years ago, community leaders, Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman and I asked the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division to review the Portland Police Bureau for bias, regardless of whether or not it is intentional, unconscious or institutional. Anything.

During this federal investigation, we opened our books, our doors and our minds.

Yesterday, I received a 42-page letter detailing the findings of their 14-month investigation.

It includes a critique of our financially-starved community-based mental health system. It states, ***"Our findings take place against***

a backdrop of a mental health infrastructure that has a number of key deficiencies..." with, "...insufficient options for adequate community based mental health services."

Given our anemic community-based mental health system, I appreciate that the findings note that the already tough job of our police officers has gotten even tougher, with situations that ***"...often shifts to law enforcement agencies the burden of being first responders to individuals in mental health crisis."***

In my last budget, this local mental health system crisis was a key reason I did not cut sworn police or firefighter positions. My thanks to the hardworking officers of the Portland Police Bureau for working in a tough situation.

The am pleased that the findings state that, ***"...most uses of force we reviewed were constitutional..."*** that ***"...many of the systemic deficiencies discussed in this letter originated prior to the current PPB administration, which has been aggressive in pursuing reform."*** I agree, we have a great improvement-minded Chief of Police in Mike Reese.

But the findings are blunt in its assessment that we get a failing grade dealing with the growing number of Portlanders who face serious mental illness and addiction. We occasionally use, ***"...unnecessary or unreasonable force during interactions with people who have or are perceived to have mental illness."***

Without defensiveness or finger pointing, we all need to absorb the seriousness of this critique and the urgent need for change. We all need to take our portion of the responsibility to improve the situation.

We will improve and we will begin to do it quickly.

Some needed changes are already underway. Like our new Police Training Center and Citizen Advisory Council. Like the diverse classes of new police recruits, drug testing and officer evaluations. I have agreed in concept to others changes in the letter of agreement:

1 Use of Force: The City is committed to revise its use of force policies to ensure that officers have necessary guidance when encountering someone with mental illness or perceived to have mental illness. In particular, the City will enhance its policy guidance on the use of Electronic Control Weapons (ECW) and techniques to de-escalate encounters arising from non-criminally related well-being checks and arrests for low level offenses.

The Chief's initiative to ensure that supervisors respond to the scene of uses of force will be continued and there will be meaningful use of force reviews through the chain of command. Training curricula will be reviewed and adjusted where appropriate to reflect the requirements of the agreement.

2 Crisis Intervention: PPB will continue to provide crisis intervention training to all officers. In addition, it will expand its Mobile Crisis Unit to ensure availability at all times and enhance non-

law enforcement capacity to respond to persons in crisis that do not pose a public safety threat. Each Mobile Crisis Unit team will consist of one specially trained officer and one specially trained mental health worker from a local social services agency.

The City agrees to establish a mental health desk at Bureau of Emergency Communications (911) staffed by trained dispatchers to ensure that calls are properly dispatched. BOEC will also direct suicide prevention/mental health calls to the County Crisis Call Center or Lines for Life when on-site PPB response is not appropriate.

The City also agrees to lead efforts to increase community mental health treatment options, such as through the establishment of a 24 hour secure drop-off and walk-in center that will provide police officers more options when assisting persons experiencing a mental health crisis.

3 Early Intervention System: The City has a robust Early Intervention System (EIS) that can track officer specific information as well as unit level and trend data. The City will utilize the system to identify individual officers, supervisors, and units for non-punitive corrective action, and to assess gaps in policy, training, supervision and accountability.

4 Misconduct Investigation: Investigations of allegations of officer misconduct are effective and fair to the officer, complainant and community only if they can be completed in a timely manner. The City agrees to take necessary steps to expedite the investigations of those complaints while preserving the thoroughness and quality of investigations and community participation.

5 Community Engagement and Outreach: Community participation in the oversight of this agreement will be important to its success. A community body will be adopted to assess on an ongoing basis the implementation of this agreement, make recommendations to the parties on additional actions, and advise the Chief and Mayor on strategies to improve community relations. The body will also provide the community with information on the agreement, its implementation and receive comments and concerns. Membership will be representative of the many and diverse communities in Portland, including persons with mental illness, mental health providers, faith communities, minority, ethnic, and other community organizations, and student or youth organizations.

These reforms and new resources will propel the Portland Police Bureau further down the path as it becomes the best local peacekeeping agency in the nation.

I welcome your thoughts and ideas.

Thank you,



Sam Adams

Portland Mayor



PORTLAND CITY HALL

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